

October 18, 2005

Dear Friend:

I am pleased to inform you that today the House passed S. 156, the Ojito Wilderness Act. Senator Bingaman introduced this bill on January 25, 2005, which is companion legislation to H.R. 362 that I introduced with Representative Heather Wilson. Today's action brings us one final step closer to making the Ojito Wilderness Area a reality.

As many of you know, our legislation designates as permanent wilderness the Ojito Wilderness Study Area in Sandoval County. The Ojito area consists of about 11,000 acres of Bureau of Land Management land characterized by pristine and dramatic landforms and rock structures, and by several rare plant populations that are indigenous to the area.

Beyond its scenic and natural beauty, the Ojito Wilderness Study Area and the surrounding lands are further recognized for their high density of cultural and archeological sites, including sites that have religious significance to Pueblo Indians. This legislation would also enable the Pueblo of Zia to buy land to unite the disparate pieces of their tribal lands. For information on this legislation please visit my website at <http://www.tomudall.house.gov/pdf/ACFFDE.pdf>.

Following passage by the House today, the legislation now needs only a signature by the President to become Public Law. I am hopeful that President Bush will do this very soon and complete the process that so many have worked so long to accomplish.

Very truly yours,

Tom Udall
Member of Congress